Living With and Reducing Hypertension

REMEMBER: Recommended preventive health services are covered at no cost to you on all Marketplace plans.

What is hypertension?

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a condition that affects millions of Americans each year – though they may not know it. Hypertension is a condition where arteries regularly have elevated blood pressure. It often has no warning signs or symptoms. Over time, this elevated blood pressure can put excess stress on your heart and circulation system.

How do I know if I have hypertension?

Because hypertension rarely has symptoms, it is important to make sure that you get the preventive care available to diagnose this illness. All Marketplace plans cover essential health benefits, which include blood pressure testing. The normal level of blood pressure is below 120/80, with 120 being the peak pressure in the arteries and 80 being the minimum pressure.

To be diagnosed with hypertension, blood pressure is usually measured at 140/90 or above. Blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89 is called prehypertension and should be discussed with your doctor to develop a prevention plan to keep the condition from worsening.

What causes hypertension?

There are certain factors that put you more at risk of developing high blood pressure, such as:

- Weight
- Family history
- Poor diet and exercise habits
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Smoking

How can I lower my blood pressure?

While hypertension cannot be cured, it's important to take steps to control your hypertension. Much like other forms of heart disease, hypertension can be prevented and treated by making lifestyle changes. Be sure to speak with your doctor or other healthcare provider to create a personal strategy for managing this condition. In some cases, your doctor will prescribe a medication to help lower your blood pressure.